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AN ESSAY
ON THE
DIVINE INSPIRATION
OF THE
HOLY SCRIPTURES.



Subj. - Appendix
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IT is manifest to all, who seriously reflect on the powers and propensities of human nature, that we are formed capable of religion, and have an inward consciousness, that we ought to worship some superior Being, on whom our safety and happiness depend: but, at the same time, the state of the world, in all places where the Bible has not been known, unanswerably proves, that we are incapable of discovering for ourselves a religion, which is worthy of God, suited to our wants, and conducive to our true interest. The shortness of life also, and the reasonable persuasion that men in general entertain of a future state, concur to shew, that our grand concern lies in another world. Yet uncertainty and perplexity, nay, palpable error and absurdity, have ever encumbered men's reasonings and conjectures on these important subjects—Even at Athens Jehovah was “the unknown God,” (Acts, c. xvii. v. 23;) and all beyond the grave was an unknown world.

The wisest of the Pagans, therefore, considered a revelation from the Deity to be exceedingly desirable, in order that bewildered mortals might learn the way, in which they could worship him with acceptance, and be happy; and some of them entertained hopes, that such an inestimable favour would at length be vouchsafed. Indeed confused expectations of this kind have been common in the world; as is manifest from the reception that hath been given to pretended revelations, which otherwise could not have obtained credit and currency.

Various impositions, in this matter, have been detected by a careful investigation: and there is but one book in the world, which so much as appears to be a

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revelation from God. This has stood the test of ages, and undergone the most severe scrutiny; and the more it has been examined by serious enquirers, the fuller conviction have they obtained of its authenticity. No man now ventures forth as an avowed adversary, to dispute its claim in the open field of fair argument: yet few in comparison are *practically* convinced, that it is the unerring word of God; and an increasing number of objectors perplex themselves and others, by discovering supposed inconsistencies, or unimportant difficulties; or by setting up their own reasonings and imaginations in opposition to its doctrines, and making that disagreement a ground of hesitation, or rejection. So that scepticism, or a partial, frivolous, disingenuous, carping infidelity, have become exceedingly common; the minds of young persons especially are poisoned by them; great pains are taken to disseminate these cavils and objections, (though they have been solidly answered again and again;) and those persons are treated as weak enthusiasts, or irrational bigots, who simply believe the Scriptures as the sure testimony of God.

It may, therefore, be seasonable, to state, with all possible brevity, some of the most conclusive reasons, by which reflecting men have been induced to submit to the authority of the Bible, and to believe, that it is a revelation from the God of Truth. By the divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, I mean, such an immediate and complete discovery, by the Holy Spirit to the minds of the sacred penmen, of those things which could not have been otherwise known, and such an effectual superintendency, as to those matters which they might be informed of by other means, as entirely to preserve them from all error, in every particular, which could in the least affect any of the doctrines or commandments contained in their writings. Every proposition, therefore, is to be considered as the sure testimony of God, in that sense, according to which the sacred penmen proposed it as truth. Thus facts occurred, and words were spoken, as they stand recorded in the scripture, as to the import of them, and the instruction to be deduced from them: but we must judge of those facts, or discourses, by the doctrinal and preceptive

preceptive parts of the scriptures: nor does it at all invalidate the complete inspiration of the sacred writers, to allow, that they expressed themselves in common language, and wrote of things as men generally spoke of them; rather than according to philosophical exactness, or in the style that was used in the schools of the learned, during the ages in which they lived. Supposed, or unimportant errors, or inaccuracies of expression in such things, are not in the least inconsistent with that entire divine inspiration, of which we speak; for the scriptures were not written to render us exact philosophers, or to instruct us in ancient history and geography; but to make us wise unto salvation. Nor do the few immaterial mistakes, which in a long course of years have crept in, through the errors of transcribers, create any difficulty or uncertainty to the humble and teachable enquirer; though they may give occasion to the self-sufficient to cavil, and object; for the "Lord taketh the wise in their own craftiness."

Moreover, it is futile and absurd, for any man to dispute against particular doctrines as unreasonable, to disallow any facts as incredible, or to quarrel with any divine dispensations, as unrighteous; when he finds himself unable to answer the plain arguments, which are adduced, to prove the whole to be the word of God. If our premises be undeniable, and our deductions unavoidable; obstinacy and self-conceit alone will persist in incredulity; and ridicule, reviling, subtle insinuations, or witty sarcasms are, in such a case, certain indications of a proud and bitter enmity to the truth itself: if then, the arguments, that shall be adduced, be sufficient to prove the Bible to be the word of God; I hope the reader will recollect, that, as a reasonable man, he is bound to study, believe, and obey it, as the rule and standard of all his principles, affections, and conduct. These things having been premised, I observe—

I. That vast numbers of wise and good men, through many generations and in distant countries, have agreed in receiving the Bible, as a divine revelation. Many of them have been noted for seriousness, erudition, penetration, and impartiality in judging of men and things: with much labour, and patient investigation,

they detected the impostures, by which their cotemporaries were duped; yet the same assiduous examination confirmed them in believing the Bible to be "the word of God;" and induced them to recommend it, living and dying, to all others, as the source of wisdom, hope, and consolation. In this view, the tradition of the church has much weight: for, whatever abuse has been made of the term, by such as were no part of the true church; yet the whole company of those, who have worshipped the living God in spirit and truth, (including them who ventured and laid down their lives, for conscience sake, and who were the most pious, holy, and useful men in every age,) having unanimously concurred, in handing down to us the scriptures as a divine revelation, and having very little differed about the books which form a part of that sacred deposit; must be allowed to be a consideration of great importance. And I cannot but suppose, that if a Being of entire impartiality, of sound judgment, and holy disposition, should be shewn the two companies, of those who have received, and of those who have rejected the scriptures; and should compare the seriousness, learning, patient investigation of truth, solid judgment, holy lives, and composure in a dying hour, (without unmanly terror, or indecent levity,) of the one company, with the character and conduct of the other; he would be induced to take up the Bible with profound veneration, and the strongest prepossession in its favour.

II. The agreement of the sacred penmen among themselves is another cogent argument of their divine inspiration. Should an equal number of cotemporaries, of the same country, education, habits, profession, natural disposition, and rank in life, concur in writing a book on religious subjects, as large as the Bible; each furnishing his proportion, without comparing notes together; the attentive reader, whose mind had been long inured to such studies, would be able to discover some diversity of opinion among them. But the penmen of the scripture succeeded each other, during the term of 1500 years: some of them were princes, or priests; others shepherds and fishermen, &c: their natural abilities, education, habits, and employments, were exceed-

exceedingly varied: they wrote laws, history, prophecy, odes, devotional exercises, proverbs, parables, doctrines, controversy, &c: each man had his distinct department: yet they all exactly coincide, in the exhibition they give us, of the perfections, works, truths, and will of God; of the nature, situation, and obligations, of man; of sin and salvation; of this world and the next; and in short, of all things connected with our duty, safety, interest, and comfort, and in the whole of the religion inculcated by them. They all were evidently of the same judgment, aimed to establish the same principles, and applied them to the same practical purposes. *Apparent* inconsistencies will indeed perplex the superficial reader: but they will vanish after a more accurate investigation: nor could ever any charge of disagreement, among the penmen of the Bible, be substantiated; for it can only be said, that they related the same facts with different circumstances which are perfectly reconcileable; and that they gave instructions suited to the persons, whom they addressed, without systematically shewing the harmony of them with other parts of divine truth. They wrote not by concert; and bestowed no pains to avoid the appearance of inconsistency: yet the exact coincidence that is perceived among them by the diligent student, is most astonishing; and cannot be accounted for, on any rational principles, without admitting that they "wrote as they" "were moved by the Holy Ghost."

To this we may add, that the scripture history accords, in a wonderful manner, with the most authentic records which remain, of the events, customs, and manners of the countries and ages, to which it stands related. The rise and fall of empires, the revolutions that have taken place in the world, and the grand outlines of chronology, &c, are coincident with those stated by the most approved ancient writers: whilst the palpable errors in these respects, detected in the apocryphal books, constitute one of the most decisive reasons, for rejecting them as spurious. The history of the bible is of far greater antiquity than any other records extant in the world; and it is remarkable, that in many instances it shews the real origin of those absurd fables, which disgrace and obscure all other histories of those

remote times; and this is no feeble proof, that it was derived from some surer source of information, than human tradition.

III. The miracles, by which the penmen of the scriptures confirmed their divine mission to their contemporaries, afford us also a most convincing proof in this matter. The account of these miracles may be evidently shewn to have been published, in the very ages and places, in which they were said to have been wrought, openly, in the presence of vast multitudes, enemies as well as friends: yet this public challenge never called forth any man to deny that they were really performed; nor was an attempt of this kind ever made till long afterwards. Can any man of common sense think, that Moses and Aaron could possibly have persuaded the whole nation of Israel, that they had witnessed all the plagues of Egypt, passed through the Red Sea, with the waters piled on each side of them, gathered the manna every morning, and seen all the wonders recorded in their history; if no such events had taken place? If then, that generation could not be thus imposed on; when could the belief of such extraordinary events be palmed upon the nation? Surely, it would have been impossible, in the next age, to persuade them that their fathers had seen and experienced such wonderful things, when they had never heard a single word about them in their lives: and when an appeal must have been made to them, that these were things well known among them! What credit could have been obtained to such a forgery at any subsequent period? It would have been absolutely necessary, in making this attempt, to persuade the whole people, that such traditions had always been current among them; that the memory of them had for ages been perpetuated by days and ordinances observed by them all; and that their whole civil and religious establishment had thence originated: and could this have possibly been effected, if they all had known, that no such memorials and traditions had ever before been heard of among them? The same might be shewn concerning the other miracles recorded in scripture, especially those of Christ and his apostles; and it might be made evident, that the man, who denies them to have been
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actually performed, must believe more wonderful things without any evidence, than those are which he rejects, though established by unanswerable proof. But brevity will only allow me to insist on one miraculous event, viz; the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: for this being once proved, the whole scripture is evinced to be a divine revelation. His doctrine and authority establishes the authenticity of the Old Testament: and the witnesses of his resurrection were the penmen of the New Testament.

Almost all human affairs are conducted by testimony; the concurrence of two or three unexceptionable witnesses is sufficient to prove any fact, that is in its own nature credible: and the resurrection of a dead person, by Omnipotence, and for the most important purposes, cannot reasonably be deemed incredible. The ancient prophets had predicted the resurrection of the Messiah, (Ps. xvi. v. 10. Isaiah c. liii. v. 10—12:) and indeed every pre-intimation of his glorious and perpetual kingdom, when compared with the prophecies of his sufferings and death, implied that he would rise again from the dead. His very enemies knew, that he had foretold his own resurrection *within three days*, and took precautions accordingly: yet the body was gone; and they could give no rational account what was become of it. They had the whole authority vested in them; and their reputation was deeply concerned: yet they rather chose to bear the open charge of the basest murder and prevarication imaginable, than excite any further enquiry; by bringing either the soldiers who guarded the sepulchre, or the disciples who were said to have stolen the body, to a public trial; though they had the latter in their custody. The eleven apostles, (to whom a twelfth was soon added,) were a sufficient number of competent witnesses, being men of plain sense and blameless lives; they could not but identify the person of their Master, whom they had so long attended; they unanimously testified, that they had received the fullest assurance of their senses to his resurrection, and at length beheld him ascend up towards heaven, till he was received out of their sight: and they persisted invariably in this testimony for many years. They were evidently intimidated

timidated to a great degree, by the crucifixion of their Lord, and backward to credit his resurrection: they could have no possible secular motive, to invent and propagate such a report; for ignominy, torture, and death must be the probable consequences of espousing the cause of one, who had been crucified as a deceiver. In all other things, they appeared simple, upright, holy men: yet, if in this they deceived, the world never yet produced such a company of artful and wicked impostors! Yet they evidently proposed no advantage to themselves from their deep laid, and well conducted schemes! They spent all the rest of their lives, in promoting the religion of Jesus; renouncing every earthly interest; facing all kinds of opposition and persecution; prepared habitually to seal their testimony with their blood; and most of them actually dying martyrs in the cause, recommending it with their latest breath. Moreover, when they went forth to preach Christ as risen from the dead; they were manifestly changed, in almost every respect, from what they had before been: their timidity gave place to the most undaunted courage; their carnal prejudices vanished, their ambitious contests ceased, their narrow views were immensely expanded, and zeal for the honour of their Lord, with love to the souls of men, seem to have engrossed and elevated all the powers of their minds. There were also many other competent witnesses to the same great event, even to the number of 500: these too concurred in the same testimony to the end of their lives; and neither fear, hope, or dissension among themselves, induced so much as one of them to vary from the testimony of the rest: nay, the apostates from christianity never openly charged the apostles with any imposition in this respect. A more complete human testimony to any event cannot even be imagined: for if our Lord had shewn himself, "openly to all the people" of the Jews, and their rulers had persisted in rejecting him; it would have rather weakened than confirmed the evidence: and if they had unanimously received him as the Messiah, it might have excited in others a suspicion, that it was a plan concerted for aggrandizing the nation.

But God himself was also pleased to add his own
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testimony to that of his servants; conferring on them the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enabling them to impart the same miraculous powers to others, by the laying on of their hands. Thus the number of witnesses continually increased, the testimony was more widely diffused, and no enemy could deny that they, who attested Christ's resurrection, performed most stupendous miracles, (Acts ch. iv. ver. 13—16). In consequence of this, the unlettered, unarmed, and despised preachers of a crucified and risen Saviour, prevailed against all the combined power, learning, wealth, superstition, and wickedness of the world, till christianity was completely established upon the ruins of Judaism and Pagan idolatry! Here again, it may be demanded, when could the belief of such facts have been obtruded on mankind, if they had never happened? Surely not in the age, when they were said to have been witnessed by tens of thousands, who were publicly challenged to deny them if they could! not in any subsequent age; for the origin of christianity was ascribed to them, and millions must have been persuaded, that they had always believed those things, which they had never to that time so much as heard of! We may then venture to assert, that no past event was ever so fully proved, as our Lord's resurrection; and that it would not be half so preposterous to doubt, whether such a man as Julius Cæsar ever existed, as it would be to question, whether Jesus actually arose from the dead—What then do they mean, who oppose some little apparent variations, in the account given of this event, by the four Evangelists, (which have repeatedly been shewn capable of an easy reconciliation;) to such an unparalleled complication of evidence, that it did actually take place?

IV. The prophecies, contained in the sacred scriptures, and fulfilling to this day, prove them to be divinely inspired. These form a species of perpetual miracles, which challenge the investigation of men, in every age; and which, though overlooked by the careless and prejudiced, cannot fail of producing conviction proportioned to the attention paid to them. The prophecies of the Messiah, which are to be found in almost all the books of the Old Testament, when compared

pared with the exact accomplishment of them, as recorded in the authentic writings of the Evangelists, abundantly prove them to have been penned under the guidance of the Holy Spirit: whilst the existence of the Jews, as a people differing from all others upon the face of the earth, and their regard to them, as the sacred Oracles handed down from their progenitors, sufficiently vouch for their antiquity; (though further proof in abundance is at hand, did brevity admit of it.) According to the predictions of these books, Nineveh hath been desolated, (Nahum. c. i, ii, iii;) Babylon swept with the besom of destruction, (Isaiah. c. xiii. xiv;) Tyre become a place to dry nets in, (Ezek. c. xxvi. v. 4, 5;) Egypt the basest of the kingdoms, &c. (Ezek. c. xxix. v. 14, 15.) These, and many other events fulfilling ancient prophecies, so many ages after they were delivered, can never be accounted for; except by allowing, that He, who sees the end from the beginning, thus revealed his secret purposes; that the accomplishment of them might prove the scriptures to be his word of instruction to mankind.

In like manner, there are evident predictions interwoven almost with the writings of every penman of the New Testament, as a divine attestation to their doctrine. The destruction of Jerusalem, with all the circumstances predicted in the Evangelists, (an account of which may be seen in Josephus's History of the Jewish Wars;) the series of ages, during which that city hath been "trodden under foot of the gentiles;" the long continued dispersion of the Jews, and the conversion of the nations to christianity; the many antichristian corruptions of the gospel; the superstition, uncommanded austerities, idolatry, tyranny and persecution of the Roman hierarchy; the division of the empire into ten kingdoms; their concurrence during many ages to support the usurpations of the church of Rome; and the existence of christianity to this day, amidst so many enemies, who have used every possible method to destroy it; when compared with the predictions of the New Testament do not come short of the fullest demonstration, which the case will admit of, that the books that contain them are the unerring word of God.

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V. Only the scriptures, (and such books as make them their basis,) introduce the infinite God, as speaking in a manner worthy of himself; with simplicity, majesty, and authority. His character, as there delineated, comprises all possible excellency, without any intermixture; his laws and ordinances accord to his perfections; his works and dispensations exhibit them; and all his dealings with his creatures bear the stamp of infinite wisdom, power, justice, purity, truth, goodness and mercy, harmoniously displayed. The description there given of the state of the world, and of human nature, widely differs from our ideas of them; yet the facts unanswerably prove it to be exactly true. The records of every nation, the events of every age, and the history of every individual, confute men's self-flattery in this respect: and prove that the penmen of the bible knew the human character better, than any philosopher, ancient, or modern, ever did. Their account teaches us what men are about, and what may be expected from them: whilst all who form a different estimate of it, find their principles inapplicable to facts, their theories incapable of being reduced to practice, and their expectations strangely disappointed. The bible, well understood, enables us to account for those events, which have appeared inexplicable to men in every age: and the more carefully any one watches, and scrutinizes all the motives, intentions, imaginations, and desires of his heart, for a length of time; the clearer will it appear to him, that the penmen of the scriptures give a far more just account of his disposition and character, than he could have done of himself. In short, man is such a being, and the world is in such a state, as they have described: yet multiplied facts, constant observation, and reiterated experience are insufficient to convince us of it, till we first learn it from the Bible: and then comparing all, that passes within and around us, with what we there read, we become more and more acquainted with our own hearts, and established in the belief of its divine original.

The mysteries contained in scripture rather confirm than invalidate this conclusion: for a pretended revelation without mystery would confute itself. Incomprehensibility is inseparable from God, and all his works,

works, even as low as the growth of a blade of grass: the mysteries of the scriptures are sublime, interesting, and useful; they display the divine perfections, lay a foundation for our hope, and inculcate humility, reverence, love and gratitude. What is incomprehensible must be mysterious; but it may be intelligible as far as revealed; and though it connect with things above our reason, it may imply nothing contrary to it. So that, in all respects, the contents of the Bible are suited to convince the serious enquirer, that it is the word of God.

VI. The tendency of the scripture constitutes another proof of this. Put the case that all men believed and obeyed the Bible, as a divine revelation; to what conduct would it lead them; and what would be the effect on society? Surely repentance, and renunciation of all vice and immorality when connected with the spiritual worship of God in his ordinances, faith in his mercy and truth, through the mediation of his Son, and all the fruits of the Holy Spirit, as visible in the lives of every true believer, would form such characters, and produce such effects, as the world hath never yet witnessed! Men would then universally do justice, speak truth, shew mercy, exercise mutual forgiveness, follow after peace, bridle their appetites and passions, and lead a sober, righteous, and godly life. Murders, wars, bitter contentions, cruel oppressions, and unrestrained licentiousness, would no more desolate the world, and fill it with misery; but righteousness, goodness, and truth would bless the earth with a felicity exceeding all our present conceptions. This is, no doubt, the direct tendency of the scripture doctrines, precepts, motives, and promises: nothing is wanting to remedy the state of the world, and fit men for the worship and felicity of heaven, but that they should believe and obey the scriptures; and if many enormous crimes have been committed, under colour of zeal for christianity; that only proves the depravity of man's heart: for the scripture, soberly understood, most expressly forbids such practices; and men do not act thus, because they duly regard it, but because they will not believe and obey it.

The tendency of these principles is exhibited in the
characters

characters there delineated, whilst the consistency between the truths and precepts of scripture, and the actions of men recorded in it, implies another argument of its divine original. Ungodly men are characterized, and their actions are recited, according to the abstract account given of human nature: and believers are represented, as conducting themselves exactly in that manner, which the principles of the Bible might have led us to expect. They had like passions with other men; but they were habitually restrained and regulated by the fear and love of God, and other holy affections: their general conduct was good, but not perfect; and sometimes their natural proneness to evil broke out, and made way for bitter repentance, and deeper humiliation: so that they appear constantly to have perceived their need of forgiveness and divine assistance; to have expected their felicity from the rich mercy of God; and, instead of abusing that consideration, to have thence deduced motives for gratitude, zeal, patience, meekness, and love to mankind.

But one character is exhibited, in the simplest and most unaffected manner, which is perfection itself. Philosophers, Orators, and Poets, in their several ways, have bestowed immense pains to describe the character of some man, in such a manner, that no fault could be found in it: and they have given us complete models of their own estimate of excellency, and sufficient proof that they laboured the point to the utmost of their ability. But the four evangelists, whose divine inspiration is now frequently doubted on the most frivolous pretences, without seeming to think of it, have done that which all other writers have failed in. They have shewn us a perfect character, by simply relating the words and actions of Christ; without making any comment on them, or shewing the least ingenuity in the arrangement of them. This is a fact, which cannot be denied; no perfect character is elsewhere delineated; and probably, no mere man could have drawn one; no person would have thought of such a character as that of Jesus; yet no flaw or fault can be found in it: this alone, I apprehend, and their entire consistency in this respect with each other,

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proves, that they wrote under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

It hath often been observed, that satan would never have influenced men to write the Bible; for then he would have been divided against himself: wicked men would not have penned a book, which so awfully condemned their whole conduct: and good men would never have ascribed their own inventions to divine inspiration; especially as such forgeries are most severely reprobated in every part of it. But indeed, it is a work as much exceeding every effort of mere man, as the sun surpasses those scanty illuminations, by which his splendour is imitated, or his absence supplied.

VII. The actual effects, produced by the scriptures, evince their divine original. These are indeed far from being equal to their tendency; because, through human depravity the gospel is not generally believed and obeyed: yet they are very considerable; and we may assert that even at present, there are many thousands, who have been reclaimed from a profane and immoral life, to sobriety, equity, truth, and piety, and a good behaviour in relative life, by attending to the sacred scriptures. Having been "made free from sin," and become the servants of God, they have their "fruit unto holiness;" and after patiently continuing in well doing, and cheerfully bearing various afflictions, they joyfully meet death, being supported by the hope of eternal life "as the gift of God through Jesus Christ:" whilst they, who best know them, are most convinced, that they have been rendered wiser, holier, and happier, by believing the Bible; and that there is a reality in religion, though various interests and passions keep them from duly embracing it. There are indeed enthusiasts also; but they become so, by forsaking the *old* rule of faith and duty, for some *new* fancy: and there are hypocrites; but they attest the reality and excellency of religion, by deeming it worth their while to counterfeit it.

VIII. Brevity is so connected with fulness in the scriptures, that they are a treasure of Divine knowledge, which can never be exhausted. The things,
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that are absolutely necessary to salvation, are few, simple, and obvious to the meanest capacity, provided it be attended by an humble teachable disposition: but the most learned, acute, and diligent student cannot in the longest life obtain an entire knowledge of this one volume. The deeper he works the mine, the richer and more abundant he finds the ore; new light continually beams from this source of heavenly knowledge, to direct his conduct, and illustrate the works of God, and the ways of men; and he will at last leave the world confessing, that the more he studied the scriptures, the greater sense he had of his own ignorance and of their inestimable value.

Lastly, "He that believeth hath the witness in himself." The discoveries which he hath made by the light of the scripture; the experience he hath had, that the Lord fulfils its promises to those who trust in them; the abiding effects produced by attending to it, on his judgment, dispositions, and affections; and the earnestness of heaven enjoyed by him in communion with God, according to the way revealed in it, put the matter beyond all doubt: and though many believers are not qualified to dispute against infidels, they are enabled, through this inward testimony, to obey and suffer for the gospel; and they can no more be convinced by reasonings and objections, that men invented the Bible, than they can be persuaded, that men created the sun whose light they behold, and by whose beams they are cheered.

And now, if an objector could fully invalidate one half, or two thirds of these arguments, (to which many more might easily be added;) the remainder would be abundantly sufficient—Nay, perhaps, any one of them so far decides the question; that were there no more proof of the Bible's being the word of God, a man could not reject it, without acting contrary to those dictates of common sense, which direct his conduct in his secular affairs—But, in reality, I have a confidence that not one of them can be fairly answered; at least it has never yet been done: and the combined force of the whole is so great, that the objections, by which men cavil against the truth, only resemble the foaming waves

waves dashing against the deep rooted rock, which hath for ages defied their unavailing fury. But though these can effect nothing more, they may beat off the poor shipwrecked mariner, who was about to ascend it, in hopes of deliverance from impending destruction.

The consequences of our present conduct, according to the scriptures, are so vast, that if there were only a bare possibility of their truth, it would be madness to run the risque of rejecting them, for the sake of gaining the whole world: What then is it, when we have such unanswerable demonstrations that they are the word of God, and cannot reasonably doubt of it for a moment, to disobey the commands and neglect the salvation revealed in it, for the veriest trifle that can be proposed to us! Especially, as it may be shewn that, (besides the eternal consequences,) the firm belief of, and conscientious obedience to, the scriptures, will render a man happier in this present life, even amidst trials, and self-denying services; than any other man can be made, by all the pomp, pleasure, wealth, power, and honour, which the world can bestow on him!

